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APPOINTMENT AS MEMBERS TO PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORY COM- MISSION ON HOLOCAUST ASSETS IN THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). Without objection and pursuant to the provisions of section 2(b)(2) of Public Law 105-186, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States:

Mr. GILMAN of New York.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania.

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a little time this afternoon to talk about some of the 25 accomplishments that this Congress has made in the area of education. We have heard a lot about education over the last week or so. The President has been a little distracted. He has not had a chance to focus on education until the last couple of weeks. He has had over 100 fund-raisers and two Cabinet meetings, so I guess in the time that he has spent between fund-raisers, being overseas and the 22 days he spent on vacation that he has not had time to sit down and talk about education until this last week. In the meantime, Congress has been working very hard on the issues of education and we do have 25 accomplishments. Some of the things that I think are most important for the accomplishments that we have had in education is getting dollars into the classroom. One of the problems that we have in our local school districts is that it is difficult to get the dollars directed into the classroom. For example, in Kansas, about 7 percent of all dollars are dollars that come from the Federal Government. Out of that 7 percent, it could be expanded to over 14 percent, but much of that money is wasted right here in Washington, D.C., where we have a large education bureaucracy that does not educate any children. The Department of Education is only a few blocks from the Capitol, itself. They have quite a few people that work there that do nothing more than demand additional paperwork from the local school districts. The average salary at the Department of Education is \$52,000 per year. Now, I would invite any of the Members to go back

and talk to their teachers and see if any of the teachers are making an average of \$52,000 in the school districts in their congressional district. My wife worked in public schools for 4 years. At that time she made significantly less than \$52,000 a year. But that is what the average amount of salary is at the Department of Education. What we have been trying to do this year is limit that amount of money that is wasted here in Washington, D.C. on education and ship those dollars out to the local school districts so that it can be spent, and our Dollars to the Classroom program would have required that 95 percent of the money gets into the classroom. The significance of that is that we could increase the amount of Federal money that is actually spent in the classroom where the rubber meets the road. That is the important thing, is that we see that our children get educated. Instead, we see a lot of it being spent right here within the District of Columbia not escaping to the local school districts. We have been working on sending dollars to the classroom to make sure that it is spent where the teachers can use that money to get the materials they need, get the books they need, make sure that the right amount of money is spent in the classroom.

Another area that we have been trying to focus on is special education. Title I money, special education money has been a requirement from the Federal Government, yet it has never yet been fully funded. That has had to have been made up by the local school districts. They have raised local taxes in order to pay for these programs. Rather than having the mandate come from the Federal Government, it ought to be paid for by the Federal Government, and the Republican Congress has spent time this Congress focusing on getting more money for special education, which is a big problem in almost every school district in south central Kansas where my district is. That is another area where we have been focusing on education.

We have also been trying to make college more affordable. We have had the lowest student loan rates in 17 years. We have had the highest ever Pell grant awards. Because we have the Balanced Budget Act, this was very clear that has come straight from Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, he said that if we would balance the Federal budget, interest rates would be lower. In fact we have balanced the Federal budget, we have a surplus this year, interest rates are lower. That directly affects student loans. My wife and I could not have gotten through college without student loans. We both had student loans. For 10 years we faithfully paid back those student loans. But it would have been nice to have a lower interest rate. It would have saved us hundreds, potentially thousands of dollars when you add that together. It is not just a fact or an accounting principle when we

talk about balancing the budget. When we talk about balancing the budget, it affects students and student loans, just as it affects people who have credit cards, car loans, home mortgages.

Another thing that we have been doing is developing a program to help get teachers into education. It is a loan forgiveness program for new teachers. Many people want to serve their local communities, serve their States, serve their country by dedicating themselves to teaching. I have to tell you, outside of the Department of Education, their salary is not very good. This program will help teachers get into education.

I just wanted the fellow Members to know that we have been working very hard on education for the last 2 years and we are glad that the President is finally focused on it.

ON SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that it is our responsibility as a society to ensure that our schools are not failing our children. We can frame this in a positive way. In the United States of America, we have no greater calling as a democracy than to ensure that our children, the next generation, our greatest investment, receive the very best start in life in education that we can make available to them. Through our public school system in this country, we ensure that democracy is passed from one generation to the next. This is no small task that we entrust to our public schools. Through our public school system throughout the country in every hamlet, community, rural school, inner city school, each student who enrolls is given an opportunity to succeed, to make something of themselves. It is our way of the American dream. I also believe just as strongly that as this session of Congress comes to an end, we must agree on bipartisan legislation that will truly improve the quality of education for our children. This is a job that we have here in Congress that will be enacted by another quality of our public school life that I think is central to its success, and that is local control. In each school district around this country, citizens elect members of a school board to set the policy for that school district. That is the way it should continue and that is how our support for education must filter through. As a school nurse in the Santa Barbara School District in my community for over 20 years, I have seen firsthand the damage that deteriorating schools can do to our children. Students cannot thrive academically if they are learning in overcrowded and crumbling buildings. I can imagine how hard it would be for us in Congress to work if we had to dodge falling plaster, to work in our hallways, to contend with leaky roofs. Yet this is just what is